

## Evolution 81

Chapter 81: Something is Fishy...

He understood that many candidates had a basic level of spiritual energy and doubted if it would be enough to help the dolls cross the finish line.

As an Enhancement specialist, he was certain that he would fail this trial if he were part of it.

Daywalkers were separated into specializations for a reason...One's weakness shouldn't ruin their chance to start treading on their evolutionary path.

It looked like Instructor Seraphis thought the same, as he assured everyone.

"Based on my calculations, every doll will make it to the finish line even if you had the worst possible spiritual talent." Just as the candidates were about to sigh in relief, Instructor Seraphis added, "But, it's not up to me if your focus gets interrupted, which will result in a faster consumption of spiritual energy."

"..."

"..."

"..."

The candidates were left speechless, realizing that if they were targeted during the trial and failed to fend off their attackers, their dolls would suffer too.

In other words...

I have to survive the chaos while staying within a two-kilometer radius!

This thought coursed through the minds of most candidates as they started distancing themselves even further from each other.

Some began forming partnerships and alliances in the blink of an eye to bolster their safety.

When the viewers and nightcrawlers saw this, they held their breaths in anticipation as they didn't expect the Trial of Spirituality, considered the most boring aspect of the assembly, to turn into a battle royale!

There were still more than fifty candidates involved, all trapped in a two-kilometer radius arena.

'Well, there goes my plans for saving energy.'

Levi sighed helplessly while pulling his staff from its holster and smashing it against the ground.

The soundwave released pulsed, akin to radar, with him in the center, showing that he was surrounded from all sides by many humanoid gray auras.

"You have three minutes before the start of the race...Use them wisely."

Rumble! Rumble!

Following Instructor Seraphis' announcement, the desolate arena started shaking under everyone's feet. Then, a small forest, a ruined city, and a few hills with underground caves arose around the race track.

It was like the race track penetrated the arena from the center, separating it into two sides—one with a natural vibe (forest, hills, dried river)...and the other with an apocalyptic vibe (ruined buildings, shattered streets, and rusty broken cars).

Everyone stared at the new arena design speechlessly, having no idea if this was still considered a Trial of Spirituality.

It made them feel like Instructor Seraphis was just using it as an excuse to see them beat each other up and eliminate more candidates.

After all, it was a known fact that he had a 100% signing rate, which could only be possible if the number of candidates was brought to its lowest...But no one was really complaining.

"Your timer starts, now!" Instructor Seraphis shouted the moment he finished with the arena.

"Let's go to the ruined city... Fighting there is much better for us."

Levi informed his team as he started sprinting toward the ruined city. Arthur and their friends followed him closely, knowing that it was the only right move at the moment.

The two-kilometer radius might be quite big for a fifty-plus-candidate battle royale, but it would do no good if they got caught in the openness of the forest or underground.

When most contestants noticed Levi's group heading to the city, the majority cleared a path for them, but their eyes reflected a hint of vicious desperation.

Demetris, Omar, Kiera, and Selene were given similar looks by nearby candidates. This made them trade knowing glances from a distance.

'If I want to survive the chaos and eliminate that disabled bastard once and for all, I need to have some meat shields.'

Demetris took the initiative and went to each member of the top ten to form a temporary alliance. Omar, Kiera, and Selene accepted the invitation as they could see that the rest of the candidates had eyes on them.

"We could still add two more. How about Nurah?" Omar asked calmly.

He was a big, muscular, dark-skinned man with short dreads and a thin mustache. He was wearing a military-like green tank top with many pockets and cargo pants matching the style. His shoes were also military-grade brown boots.

With his reinforced steel Tonfa as a weapon, it made him resembled a soldier fresh out of the boat.

"Not a chance." Demetris sneered, "She's too stuck up to join anyone's squad."

When Omar and the rest focused on Nurah, they noticed that she was already sitting on top of a tree branch with one leg above the other, smiling as she watched the hectic arena.

The few ones daring to approach her were sent away with a shake of her head.

"Let's just add two more from the top twenty," Kiera suggested.

She was a petite girl, no taller than 4'11 (150cm) with a compact and gymnastic build. She seemed to be from an Irish bloodline as she had golden-tan skin and freckles, which matched cutely with her long, wavy autumn hair.

Yet, the most unique part about her face was her apple-green pupils...She had one pupil slightly larger than the other.

She was wearing ripped jeans, an oversized gray hoodie, and fingerless gloves with a belt holding multiple knives.

"No, let's get into position. If they want to join us, they know where to find us."

Demetris rejected her proposal and chased after Levi's squad, wanting to stay as near as possible to them. Omar and the others glanced at each other for a moment and then chased after him, realizing that he was right.

It was best to invest their time in preparing a prime location rather than going around requesting two more candidates.

In almost no time, the crowded arena was emptied as every candidate or alliance had chosen their own hideouts. Some went underground, some hid in the forest, some picked the ruined buildings, and some even hid in the sewers.

This left only the fifty-plus wooden dolls standing in silence at the southern side of the arena, with no other humans in sight.

Instructor Seraphis reached inside his pocket and pulled out a gray wooden totem in the shape of a square wallet...He rubbed its surface twice, and then tens of small dragonfly-like drones flew out of it like it was a genie lamp.

When Shia and the rest of the viewers saw this, their expressions turned envious.

'A Dimensional Wallet...Ah, when will I get my chance to get my hands on one?' Shia sighed wistfully.

She knew that dimensional wallets were highly inaccessible, even the ones with the smallest possible dimensional room.

The only way to obtain them was to purchase them from the Solar Aegis Sanctuary. Unfortunately, they sold them only to Warden Daywalkers and higher.

While they couldn't support lifeforms inside, they were still extremely important and useful as they could store the Daywalkers' belongings in a confined time-frozen dimension...In other words, nothing gets spoiled inside it.

After the drones spread out inside the arena, Instructor Seraphis connected them to the live stream and had the staff behind the stage operate them, and gave the viewers access to watch the desired footage.

Shia and her friends switched immediately to the drone, focusing on Levi's squad, just to see them spread out inside a ruined building, with each member keeping a close watch near a window or a hole in the walls.

Levi was seen leaning on a wall near a shattered hole, not bothering to peek outside even once.

Suddenly, Instructor Seraphis' voice resounded across the arena, causing everyone to tense up immediately.

"This is your last chance to shine...Let the race begin!"

The wooden dolls started clattering as they came to life one by one, their hollow eyes turned as bright as a full moon.

The candidates' rankings were written on their chests, making everyone able to easily identify their owners.

Demetris, Omar, Arthur, Jojo, and the rest, with somewhat a clear sight of the race, were spotted peeking at the dolls.

"What's happening?" Rayan asked in the group chat they had created the first night of the assembly.

"The dolls are starting to move...Mine is in the lead." Jojo shared with a faint smirk.

Her eyes were affixed on the sea of dolls moving at different speeds in a straight path. Besides some noticeable dolls accelerating past the pack, the majority of dolls were moving at a relatively standardized speed.

As she mentioned, her doll was currently at the frontline, followed closely by Nurah's, Demetris', Kiera's, and Melissa's...Levi and the others' dolls were left with the biggest pack.

"You bald-headed demon, I didn't know your spiritual talent was this good."

Arthur clicked his tongue in the group chat as he watched Jojo's doll pull away from the front runners. Even Nurah's and Demetris' dolls were left to eat her doll's dust...As for his own, he wasn't surprised to see that it was buried in the crowd.

He was more surprised to see his brother's doll also buried next to him, stumbling up and down along the way.

"Big bro, why aren't you at the front?" He sent a private message.

"If I finish the race, I will pass the trial." Levi replied calmly.

Yet, this was enough for Arthur to understand that his big brother didn't want to leave him behind to fend off the others' aggression.

He knew that his brother's spiritual prowess was unlike anyone else, and if he gave it his best, his doll might finish the race in less than a minute.

Although Arthur appreciated his big brother looking out for him, he couldn't help but frown deeply.

"Big bro, don't ruin your chances to score more points for me...Your wager comes first."

"Don't worry, I know what I am doing." Levi sealed the conversation at once with his infamous sentence.

While Arthur believed that Levi was deliberately slowing down his doll's speed for his sake, in reality, it was only a part of it.

'Something is fishy about this trial...' Levi knitted his eyebrows tightly as he gazed at Instructor Seraphis' distant spiritual aura.